



PHARAOH'S LAND AND BEYOND

Ancient Egypt
and Its Neighbors

EDITED BY

Pearce Paul Creasman AND Richard H. Wilkinson

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Children of Other Gods

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Bettina Bader*

Introduction

In order to discuss the ancient Egyptian attitude towards non-local and “foreign” people in the best possible way it is necessary to start with some considerations of the current situation of the “interpreters.” It is clear that research questions such as the topic of this chapter are driven by modern/current interests and problems as well as by our own life experiences. Before it is possible to ask questions such as “how did Egyptians treat people from abroad and interact with them,” it must be clarified that our modern world and personal situations influence the way we look at the evidence. Currently we take this topic so seriously for obvious reasons. Moreover, we must remain aware that our worldview is heavily influenced by the tradition of western philosophy.

Another important point is the consideration of post-colonial research undertaken in other parts of the world, because early Egyptian archaeology was also driven by a desire to acquire objects of art worthy to be displayed in European and North American museums. Most governments of “developed” western countries were attracted by the possibility to combine cultural efforts of research and collecting with political/colonial aims of the respective period. “Egyptomania” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century CE boosted this field. At the same time the discipline of Egyptology developed a colonial and male viewpoint on the ancient culture. While such and similar factors have been identified and theorized at length in social anthropology and archaeologies of other parts of the world, Egyptology is becoming aware of its lack of theoretical (self-)scrutiny.

*Bettina Bader currently leads the Austrian Science Fund financed project Beyond Politics—Material Culture in Second Intermediate Period Egypt and Nubia hosted by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (FWF—Y754-G19).

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